

TESTIMONY BY JERRE CORY M.A., CSW, FORENSIC INTERVIEWER, CHILD
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HOUSE BILL No 4420

I am here to testify about a case that would not have been eligible for a joint DHS and law enforcement investigation under the proposed changes in this bill and explain how the investigative process occurred and the results of that investigation.

Jane was referred to child protective services by an anonymous person who reported that Jane was hit with a belt, had encopresis, and that this child had been left in the basement with her "poopy" underwear stuffed in her mouth. The reporting person stated that parents frequently told the child that she was "bad" and that they were going to drop her off at St Vincent's Home for Children and leave. The basement that Jane was confined to was also covered with animal feces.

The protective service worker visited the child at school and the child disclosed that her dad had locked her in a dog cage with "poopy" underwear in her mouth and that her mother watched. The school reported that Jane was developmentally delayed and being tested for special education. After the worker concluded his interview with Jane, he visited the parents and advised them of the allegations made by their child. The worker asked the parents to bring Jane to Angel House for a forensic interview, consistent with Children's Assessment Center standards of practice. I serve as the forensic interviewer for Angel House, Child & Family's CAC. I will share some of this report using mostly the child's words and phrases.

Jane came to the interview with a large mark on her right cheek and scratches on her neck. I asked her what happened and she said that one of her dogs had knocked her down that morning, when she was outside and trying to get in. She stated that he had knocked her down in some "poop" and she had to take a bath. She lives with her mom, Ann Brown, then she said her Mom doesn't like it if she says Brown and that I should cross that out and put Jones. (She was reading my notes upside down.) She said she lives with her dad who I could just call John Jones. She said that her Mom and Dad fight. Then she covered her face and said " ooops, I am not supposed to say that ." I asked who had told her not to tell and she said her Mom and Dad told her to say they argue, but not to say they fight.

I asked Jaine if she knew why she was here today and she said no. I asked her if she had ever had an accident in her underwear, and she said that she peed in the bed, but that was long time ago. I asked her if she got in trouble and she said "No-yes". Then she put her hands over her mouth.

I asked if she had accidents in her pants. She said she gets "whippings" and she's learning how not to go in her pants. Jasmine stated she "poops" in the toilet sometimes. Mom and Dad yell-Go take a bath. I asked if they punished her in other ways. She demonstrated standing in the corner with her hands on the wall. I asked if any other ways

and she stated" they make me clean up dog poop. Mom and Dad hit me with their hand and belt."

I asked her if she remembered a man coming to see her at school and she started crying. Stating " Mommy and Daddy told me not to tell. I'll get a whooping." She cried more then said that daddy put her in a cage and put her poop underwear in her mouth. She stayed in the cage until dinner. Mom was watching.

She then said Dad made her get naked. I asked her if he touched her anywhere and she gasped and said no. Then she said "OK- I'll tell the truth. Daddy is nasty-he has s-e-x." She then asked me if I knew what she spelled and I stated sex. She explained that he puts his weenie in her bottom. That Mom is sleeping when he does this. This happens in her bedroom. Jasmine explained that she is on her stomach when Daddy puts his weenie in. Daddy told her not to tell Mommy or they wouldn't like each other. Jasmine indicated that it hurt when Daddy puts his weenie in her. This started happening when she was 6. He comes into her room in a robe, or underwear, which he pulls down. He pulls down her underwear down a little. He stopped doing this 3 days ago. He has been doing this every night for 2 years. She then started to cry and asked if she could stop talking about this. I asked her if she wanted to take a break, and she said yes.

At this point I brought in the crisis counselor to sit with her while I met with the team. The prosecutor, protective services worker and I met to plan the next course of action.

RESULT: We facilitated her saying good-bye to her mother, who was then taken home by a police officer. This child was taken into protective custody, and taken to the hospital for a medical exam by a police officer. That exam determined that irreparable damage had been done to this child's rectum, and during the exam she kept apologizing because she could not control her bowels. The nurse examining her wept. The father fled in his car, and was later arrested in Florida after being put on Crime Stoppers.

If we had not interviewed this child as a team in a child friendly environment, we may not have gotten any of this information. This child had kept this horrible secret for two years.

Please consider the words of this 8 year old girls and do not change the language of Bill 4420. If we had not had the team working together, this child would not have been taken into custody immediately. We can only speculate what further abuse to her would have resulted in, but we do know that law enforcement is crucial in expediting these cases and protecting our children.

Thank You.



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